

## Say it, Just Say it by peypsi

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**Summary:** Eddie is sick of keeping his relationship with Richie a secret.

## Say it, Just Say it

"Tell me you love me."

"What?"

"You heard me, Richard. Tell me you love me."

Richie stared on in both shock and bewilderment. One minute the pair of them had been singing along to the car radio, the next everything had fallen silent and then Eddie hit him with... well, that. Turning his eyes back out over the dark road, Richie's hand tightened on the wheel.

The teens had been dating for some time. It all happened so fast, Richie thought. One minute, they were just kids sitting at the quarry, the next they were seniors making out at the drive in. But no one knew. No one knew of the late-night visits or the hidden kisses between classes. No one knew about Richie and Eddie. Not even their closest friends.

And then, there they were. And Richie's heart was slamming, thundering against his chest. He was sure Eddie must've been able to hear it over the music. Usually bright, smiling lips pursed tightly in that moment as the taller teen stared out over the road, eyes seemingly glazed over as he got all too far in his own head.

"Richie?" Eddie asked, his brow furrowed in that moment, never letting his eyes stray from the others profile. "Rich—at least tell me why." His voice was weak in that moment, which wasn't anything unusual for Edward Kaspbrak, though his throat strained at the mere thought of what excuse Richie might come up with.

"Why what?"

"Why you won't say it."

"Why do I have'ta say it first?"

Eddie sighed, loosely crossing his arms over his chest as he finally broke his eyes away from the others features, turning his gaze out to

the passenger side window. "Then don't say it... But—do you? Yes or no?"

Richie was quiet still, knuckles growing white as he gripped the steering wheel that little bit tighter. "You—you know I do, Eddie. You know I do." His voice was low, breathy, as if the words were a struggle to get out. "Why—why all this now? Why now?"

Richie had wanted to say it. He had replayed uttering those three little perfect words so many times over in his head. It was always early in the morning in his mind; light and warmth streaming in through the cracks of the curtain, a sleepy Eddie cuddling into his side. He would press his face into Eddie's hair and breathe in deep of whatever fruity shampoo his boyfriend had used the night prior. He would kiss his lover awake. He would whisper the words so gently against Eddie's lips. They'd have really great morning sex.

Never did he think he'd be forced to say it out of nowhere.

Idly, Eddie had taken to pulling at a frayed string around the hem of his old sweater. Well, it wasn't his. It was Richie's. He had simply claimed it as his own on one of their long car rides. All too often, the pair needed to escape. They'd go driving and spend the day far from the borders of Derry. It was as if, even for a few hours, all the pain and hiding was shredded away. They could be happy. Together.

But now, he was overthinking. Maybe Richie didn't love him. Maybe he was ashamed of their relationship. The loudmouth Richie Tozier actually managed to keep a secret? It only made sense. Why else wouldn't Richie want to showcase their development? Their development that had been going on for nearly three months.

"Because." The smaller finally stated through a sigh, dropping small hands into his lap, nervously fiddling with his fingers. "I wanna be with you, Richie."

"You *are* with me, Eds."

"No."

"No?"

"Not the way I want to be."

Silence ensued once more. It was starting to drill into Eddie's brain. The musical tune didn't seem nearly as calming and nostalgic as he had only a few short minutes ago. Now, Eddie would have preferred to be deaf.

Richie felt as if his heart had been impaled. He finally brought his eyes back to Eddie for a short moment, taking in the others shadowed features. Soft, chalky skin, deep and downturned eyes, freckles barely visible under the soft light as lamps passed briefly overhead.

"How do you want to be?" Richie knew it was a dumb question the moment it left his lips, but yet again, there he was, speaking before thinking.

"I want to be able to kiss you, Rich. All the time. I wanna— I wanna hug you in front of our friends. I wanna go on proper dates with you. Not— sneak out at whatever time and skip town for a night." Eddie sighed. It was overdrawn. Completely exaggerated. Nothing short of Richie's language.

"Eds—You know what people will say."

"I don't care anymore, Richie." His words were simple and stern, deep eyes turning back to his secret boyfriend in that moment.

"I do." And that was the first nail in the coffin. "Eds, I don't want you getting hurt. You heard about that guy they found in a ditch a little north of the Kissing Bridge. What if that was you? Do you know how much that'd kill me? Christ knows you wouldn't let me do anything about it, either." Breathing harshly through his nose then, Richie rested his head in his hand, staring out the windshield as if searching for some sort of answer.

"I wanna be with you too, Eddie. I do. But- but we have to give it time. Just wait a little longer, baby. Please?"

Eddie stayed quiet. His eyes burned with tears he refused to let fall.

"How much longer, Richie? How much longer is *'a little longer'*?"

Until we graduate? Until we have enough money to get out of this—out of this good for nothing, fucking town?"

A tear rolled down the smaller teens cheek then, though he was quick to brush it away with his sleeve. Eddie might've been perceived as weak by all those around him, sometimes even Richie, but he refused to be in that moment.

"I—" Richie choked, *"I don't know, Eddie. I don't."* He chewed at the inside of his cheek anxiously. "When it's safe. When I know you won't get hurt— when we won't get hurt."

Slouching down into his seat, Eddie shortly leaned his head against the window, glass cool against his forehead which was undoubtedly throbbing with rage in that instant.

He couldn't help the hate that was bubbling in his heart. It made his chest feel heavy, like thick, dark tar was pulling him down. He didn't care. He didn't care if he got hurt. At least, if he did, and if he perished, he would have lived as himself. As who he wanted to be.

"Eds? Baby?"

Eddie hadn't noticed, but the car had stopped. They were somewhere between towns on a dark stretch of road. Blinking, Eddie turned his eyes to his boyfriend, his own red and pained, while Richie seemed nothing short of worried.

"Why can't we tell the others? At least?" The smaller asked then, voice soft as he bared squeaked out the words. "Why can't they know? They won't care."

"I never thought— I just never thought that you'd want to." Undoing his seatbelt then, Richie slipped across the front, single seat of his dad's old station wagon. Slowly, almost hesitantly, he slipped an arm over Eddie's shoulders, the other coming down over the smaller's fiddling fingers.

Gently, Richie's lips found their way to Eddie's hair, and then his temple, and brow and cheek, hoping he could help ease the pain and anger out of his love. "We—we can tell them. I'm sorry."

Another kiss, "I just didn't think, Eds. I didn't think it'd matter this much."

"Of course, it matters, Richie... Don't you want to be with me? Like this? All the time?"

"Yes. Yes, Eds. God, you have no idea." Finally, Richie pressed his lips to Eddie's in a tender, light kiss. "You have no idea how many times I've reached out to touch you. To hold you. Kiss you. I wanna do it all with you all the time."

Another kiss was pressed between lips, and soon, Eddie's fingers were carding up through the others messy hair. Richie all too eagerly leaned into the others touch, short hum reverberating in his chest.

"Tomorrow," he shortly nodded, "tomorrow, we'll tell them, okay? We'll tell everyone."

That warmed Eddie's heart. From his toes to his eyes, the teen filled with nothing but warmth, and he kissed his boyfriend a little harder, a little needier, soon humming himself as tongues brushed and rolled together in that perfect, sweet way.

Richie was soon pulling Eddie closer, and the smaller eagerly hooked his knees over Richie's lap; arms coiled tightly around his boyfriends shoulders as he drew their bodies flush against one another.

"Richie?"

Another kiss.

"Yeah, babes?"

His hands slid up Eddie's shirt.

"You love me?"

He inched his fingers under Richie's collar.

"You know I do."

Richie could taste the Ventolin on Eddie's warm breath.

*"Prove it."*